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## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER (LGBT) CAUCUS

November 19, 2014

VIA EMAIL

Bill Honig and Nancy McTygue, Co-Chairs  
History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee  
Instructional Quality Commission  
1430 N Street, Suite #5111  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Email: [hssframework@cde.ca.gov](mailto:hssframework@cde.ca.gov)

### **RE: 2014-2015 History-Social Science Framework Update, FAIR Education Act**

Dear Co-Chairs Honig and McTygue:

On behalf of the California Legislative Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Caucus, I write to reiterate our caucus' priority of ensuring the contributions of LGBT individuals and people with disabilities are fairly represented in history and social studies curriculum and to offer suggestions on how to best do so.

The passage of Senate Bill 48, or the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive and Respectful (FAIR) Education Act in 2011 represented a milestone for the LGBT community. As members of the LGBT Caucus, we understand that being out and visible is one of the most important things we can do and many of us have worked tirelessly with, and on behalf of, LGBT Californians who have yet to realize the long sought goals of equality and equity. With the implementation of the FAIR Education Act, we believe that the state has a unique opportunity not only to ensure that its students are well-equipped to live, work and thrive in a rapidly changing and diverse world, but also to acknowledge the contributions LGBT individuals have made that have gone either unnoticed or ignored.

The FAIR Education Act amended the Education Code to require that social science instruction include “the role and contributions of...lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans, [and] persons with disabilities...to the economic, political, and social development of California and the United States of America.” The FAIR Education Act also prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in textbooks, classroom materials and school-sponsored activities.

We believe that students should be exposed to curriculum that is inclusive and reflective of their own histories and those of their classmates. We also believe it is important for students to feel confident and safe, both emotionally and physically, in order to learn and thrive in school. Unfortunately, this is not the case for a large portion of our LGBT students. For many, bullying and harassment can impede a student’s ability to learn and this can have a devastating impact on his or her life outcome. However, with a successful implementation of the FAIR Education Act,

we have a chance to change this. Studies have shown that LGBT-inclusive instructional materials are linked to greater student safety and lower rates of bullying.

The representation and contribution of LGBT individuals must be accurate and inclusive to bring the History-Social Science Framework into compliance with the law. In our opinion, however, the current draft of the History-Social Science Framework under review by the Instructional Quality Commission does not meet SB 48's requirements or its intention and may further tokenize the LGBT community. The current draft only includes references to two gay men, Harvey Milk and Cleve Jones. To comply with the FAIR Education Act, the framework should also include lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Americans. We also believe that the framework should have diverse portrayals of LGBT people, including LGBT people of color, to accurately reflect the diversity of California and prepare students to live in a diverse world.

To provide for more robust and comprehensive inclusion, we endorse the recommended changes in *Making the Framework FAIR*, a report submitted to IQC by the Committee on LGBT History, an affiliated group of the American Historical Association. The report was developed by 20 of the country's leading scholars of LGBT history and they produced scholarship-supported recommendations with suggested resources for teachers.

Lastly, we recommend that you use consistent and modern terminology throughout the framework. References to "homosexuals" or "homosexual Americans" should be replaced with "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans." Additionally, the term "gay marriage" should be replaced with "marriage for same-sex couples" in order to make it inclusive.

The goal of the FAIR Education Act is to provide California students with a full and accurate understanding of the role of LGBT Americans in our history and to promote an atmosphere of safety and respect in California schools, and the LGBT Caucus is in strong support. Should you have any questions regarding our recommendations for full implementation of the FAIR Education Act in the History-Social Science Framework, please contact me at 916-319-2024.

Sincerely,



RICHARD S. GORDON  
Assemblyman, 24<sup>th</sup> District  
Chair, Legislative LGBT Caucus

cc: Commissioners, Instructional Quality Commission  
Tom Adams, Executive Director, Instructional Quality Commission